

*FACULTY PARTICIPATION IN UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENT*¹

THE present government of American universities and colleges is altogether anomalous. The president and trustees hold the reins of power and exercise supreme control, while the professors are legally in the position of employees of the corporation. In the best institutions, however, it should be explicitly recognized that the status of the professors is in practise a good deal better than could be claimed as a matter of mere legal right. In the first place, the professors hold office for life or during good behavior or till the arrival of the age for superannuation with a reasonable pension. And in the second place, in the best American universities all educational matters have been either formally or by tacit consent delegated by the trustees to the faculties for authorization and final disposition. The place of the faculty as the sole educational authority of the university may be considered established, even though in some reputable universities the board of trustees reserves the right of veto or revision. Certainly in Cornell University the supremacy of the faculty in all educational matters has been maintained for a score of years, and professorial tenure of office is permanent and secure. Furthermore, the right to absolute freedom of thought and speech for all members of the faculty has been vigorously asserted and constantly enjoyed.

It should, therefore, at the outset be candidly acknowledged that a professor who enjoys a life-tenure of office, who is absolutely free to think and speak and write what he believes to be the truth, and who is a member of a body which controls the educational administration of the university, is already in possession and enjoyment of

¹ From the report to the trustees of Cornell University by President J. G. Schurman.

the highest, best and most vital things which inhere in his calling and function. Yet while all this is true the professor may be dissatisfied with the other conditions under which he is compelled to do his work. And this is undoubtedly the case in America.

Compare the American professor with the scholars and scientists of Oxford and Cambridge. They are their own boards of trustees. The legal corporation of an Oxford or Cambridge college is composed of the head (president, master, or whatever other name may be given to him) and the fellows, who are the teachers of the institution; and this body fills all vacancies by cooptation. Again in the two universities with which these self-governing colleges are connected there is a similar exercise of authority by the professors, and if it is not so complete that is only because it is shared by the nonresident Masters of Arts.

Look again at a German university. The state furnishes the funds for its maintenance and development, but, subject to the very light touch of a minister of education, the government of the university is in the hands of the faculty.

What the American professor wants is the same status, the same authority, the same participation in the government of his university as his colleague in England, in Germany and in other European countries already enjoys. He chafes at being under a board of trustees which in his most critical moods he feels to be alien to the Republic of Science and Letters. Even in his kindest moods he can not think that board representative of the university. For the university is an intellectual organization, composed essentially of devotees of knowledge—some investigating, some communicating, some acquiring—but all dedicated to the intellectual life. To this essential fact the American professor wants the gov-

ernment of his university to conform. And he criticizes presidents and boards of trustees because under the existing plan of government they obstruct the realization of this ideal—nay, worse, actually set up and maintain an alien ideal, the ideal of a business corporation engaging professors as employees and controlling them by means of authority which is exercised either directly by “busybody trustees” or indirectly through delegation or usurpation by a “presidential boss.”

What is needed in American universities to-day is a new application of the principle of representative government. The faculty is essentially the university; yet in the governing boards of American universities the faculty is without representation. The only ultimately satisfactory solution of the problem of the government of American universities is the concession to the professoriate of representation in the board of trustees or regents and these representatives of the intellectual, which is the real life of the university, must not be mere ornamental figures; they should be granted an active share in the routine administration of the institution.

How could such a reform be carried out in Cornell University?

The board of trustees of Cornell University is a genuinely representative body. That is, it represents everybody but the faculty. The state of New York is represented by the governor and other *ex-officio* trustees and also (since the recent amendment of the charter) by trustees appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. The alumni are represented by trustees whom they themselves elect, and in June last a woman was, happily, once more elected as one of the alumni trustees. And, apart from alumni and state, the general public is represented by the trustees—half of the entire body if

the *ex-officio* trustees be not counted—whom the board itself elects presumably from citizens who are especially concerned for the promotion of higher education or who are particularly interested in Cornell University. The trustees thus elected by co-optation number three annually; and it is the custom to reelect these trustees when their term expires.

Now in case of the death or resignation of one of these cooptatively elected trustees, the board might, without any change in the charter, ask the professoriate to select a candidate for the vacant position and then formally elect the candidate thus recommended. This process might be repeated till the professors had designated one third of the trustees now elected by the board, and thereafter professorial representation might remain in that ratio.

For the purpose of such representation it would probably be wise and expedient to divide the professorial electorate into groups each of which should elect one trustee. Only full professors would have the suffrage as only full professors hold permanent appointments. The full professors in the graduate school might constitute one electoral group, to fill (say) the first trusteeship assigned to the professoriate. The second electoral group might be composed of the full professors of arts and of law, and the third of the full professors of science and of medicine (in Ithaca). The full professors in the two engineering colleges and in architecture would naturally form a fourth electoral group, and those in the two state colleges—agriculture and veterinary medicine—a fifth. The medical college in New York City would furnish the sixth electoral group, but the number of professors entitled to vote should perhaps be limited to those who give their entire time to the work of the institution or those who

are heads of the more important departments.

This plan would give the professors a share in the government of the university through the voice and vote of their own elected representatives, who (unless an unalterable state law forbids) should preferably be members of the faculty. But this injection of professorial trustees into the board would be a somewhat slow process, if, as is here recommended, it took effect only when vacancies occurred by death or resignation in trusteeships now filled by cooptation of the Board. There is, however, another measure of relief which could and should be forthwith adopted, and which should continue in operation whether the privilege of representation in the board of trustees be conceded or denied to the professoriate.

While the faculties of the university control educational affairs they have, under the statutes, nothing to do with the appointment of teachers, the appropriation of funds, or other business vitally connected with the life and work of the institution or the standing and efficiency of the several departments. Here, again, it is true that practise is more considerate than theory or ordinance. For in case of appointments the president makes no nominations to the board without previous conference and practical agreement with the professors in the department or allied departments concerned. The time, however, has now arrived to codify this practise and establish it as a matter of professorial right. And at the same time the right of the professors to share in other ways in the government and administration of the faculties or colleges to which they belong, and so far as practicable of the entire university itself, needs to be specifically recognized and formally confirmed.

Towards this goal the university has been

gradually tending for some years past. There may not have been a distinct consciousness of it in the general mind of the academic community, but there has been a vague yearning against a background of dissatisfaction and a foreground of hope. The situation will be brought to the consciousness of itself and crystallized in and through the idea and program of professorial participation in the management and control of the university.

The plan to be proposed has the fundamental merit of every salutary reform: it is the modification and extension of an idea and organization already in successful operation. Professors sit, deliberate and vote with the trustees in the administrative boards and councils (as they are called) which manage the affairs of the university library and of the medical college in New York. The professors are elected by their colleagues for a term of two or three years, and the trustees are similarly chosen by the board of trustees. Under the statute creating these councils they are merely advisory bodies whose resolutions come as recommendations to the board of trustees or to the executive committee, but in practise these recommendations of the men selected by the board and by the faculty to keep in intimate touch with the affairs of those great departments of the university and to dispose of them in the combined light of business and educational experience, are regarded by the board as expressions of the highest wisdom available under the circumstances and are regularly approved or, if not approved at once, merely referred back in special cases for further consideration in view of some new contingency or some unforeseen bearing upon the general policy of the university.

The council of the medical college in New York City consists of the president of the university, who is *ex-officio* chairman,

three trustees elected by the board for a term of three years, and the dean of the medical faculty and two professors elected by that faculty, for a term of two years.

The president recommends that a council of substantially this type be as soon as possible established for every college in Cornell University (except the state colleges for which councils composed exclusively of trustees have already been organized). Whether the professorial members of the council outnumber, or are outnumbered by, the trustee members is not a matter of any consequence if only it be understood that this is a scheme devolving genuine responsibility upon the professors for the administration and government of their collegiate unit of the university. If these councils are in practise to be as independent of the executive committee, and even of the full board, as the medical college council in New York City, it will probably be found necessary to allocate annually fixed portions of the income of the university to the different colleges. And with the existing distribution of funds as basis this assignment should not be an impossible task.

This is a plan of partnership between trustees and professors for the government and administration of the university. It is not the German system, which has no board of trustees, nor the English system, in which the professors are the corporation, but it is a modification of the American system in which the trustees voluntarily invest the professors with a share of their own powers and functions (devolving on them corresponding responsibilities), and guarantee them the maximum of authority, independence and institutional control which seems compatible with the American idea of university organization and government.

To these councils would be assigned the

duty of dealing with all business of every kind affecting the several colleges. Whatever business now comes before the executive committee or the board of trustees affecting Sibley College or the College of Arts and Sciences or any other college of the university would be taken up by the appropriate council and settled in the form of resolutions which would be sent to the trustees for final approval and ratification. In time the councils would undoubtedly be empowered by the board of trustees to dispose definitely of routine business and minor affairs reporting only their action to the trustees. But at the outset it seems wise to follow in this respect the example already established by the council of the medical college.

There are, however, two deviations which should be made from that model, if it is to be used in Ithaca, and which indeed experience shows may in time be advantageously adopted in New York. In the first place not only should the term of office of professorial members of the council be limited, but professors should be ineligible for more than one reelection. The object of this restriction is to keep the faculty in general in close touch with the council. And, in the second place, the president should be required (as he is not in the case of the medical college council) to submit all nominations for appointments to the council in order that they may be voted on and the record of the vote sent to the board of trustees. For the reform here discussed involves the surrender of power not only by the trustees but also by the president, the supreme object being to secure (by means of the representative system applied to faculties) effective professorial participation in the administration and government of the university.

The president recommends that the foregoing scheme for taking the professoriate

into partnership with the trustees in the government and administration of the university by means of college councils composed of representatives of both be adopted by the board of trustees at the earliest practicable date. Some features of the scheme may need modification, but it will be easy to determine what changes are advisable after trustees and professors have got together in councils for the transaction of the business of the different collegiate units of the university.

A further step in the same direction should also be taken at the present time. Under the existing statutes the deans of the faculties of arts and sciences and of the graduate school are appointed by the board of trustees on the nomination of the president. The faculty has indeed some voice in the matter, for it votes on the nomination of the president and sends the record of its vote to the board of trustees. But the time has arrived when the right of the faculty to select its own chief officer should be recognized and confirmed. The president recommends that the statute be amended so as to invest the faculty with exclusive power in this regard. The faculty would of course report its action to the trustees.

J. G. SCHURMAN

THE CLEVELAND CONVOCATION WEEK MEETING

THE sixty-fourth meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the eleventh of the "Convocation week" meetings, will be held in Cleveland from December 30, 1912, to January 4, 1913. The first general session of the association will be called to order at 10 A.M. on Monday, December 30, by the retiring president, Dr. Charles E. Bessey, who will introduce the president of the meeting, Dr. Edward C. Pickering. After addresses of welcome and a reply by President Pickering, announcements will be made by secretaries. The general session will then

adjourn and the sections will be organized in their respective halls. Where sections have programs, the reading of papers will begin after organization and will be continued in the mornings and afternoons of the following days. The council will meet on Monday morning, December 30, and each morning, in the council room at 9 o'clock. On Monday evening, Dr. Bessey will give the address of the retiring president, on "Some of the Next Steps in Botanical Science," to be followed by a reception to members of the association and affiliated societies.

The addresses of retiring vice-presidents before the sections will be as follows:

Vice-president Frost, before the Section of Mathematics and Astronomy: "The Spectroscopic Determination of Stellar Velocities, considered practically."

Vice-president Millikan, before the Section of Physics: "Unitary Theories in Physics."

Vice-president Cameron, before the Section of Chemistry: "The Chemistry of the Soil."

Vice-president Shimek, before the Section of Geology and Geography: "Significance of the Pleistocene Mollusks."

Vice-president Nachtrieb, before the Section of Zoology: "Section F—Is it Worth While?"

Vice-president Newcombe, before the Section of Botany: "The Scope of State Natural Surveys."

Vice-president Ladd, before the Section of Anthropology and Psychology: "The Study of Man."

Vice-president Norton, before the Section of Social and Economic Science: "Comparative Measurements of the Changing Cost of Living."

Vice-president Thorndike, before the Section of Education: "Educational Diagnosis."

Vice-president Porter, before the Section of Physiology and Experimental Medicine: "On the Function of Individual Cells in Nerve Centers."

The full program of the meeting, which will include the programs of the affiliated societies, will be issued at the beginning of the meeting and will contain announcements of public lectures, presidential addresses before the different societies, discussions and arrangements for joint meetings, together with the times of dinners, smokers and other social functions.

Cleveland is in the territory of the Central Passenger Association. Legislative acts hav-